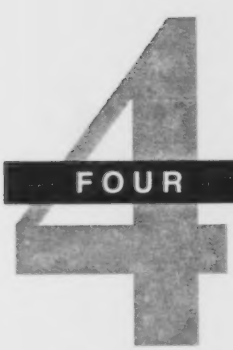
Curriculum Handbook *for* **Parents**

2004–2005

Catholic School Version

GRADE FOUR



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This document, along with most Alberta Learning documents, can be found on the Web site at **http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca**.

Parent documents referenced in this handbook, along with most Alberta Learning documents, are available for purchase from:

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Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T5L 4X9
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Toll free: 310–0000 (inside Alberta)
Fax: 780–422–9750
Internet: http://www.lrc.learning.gov.ab.ca

Telephone numbers of branches referred to in this handbook can be reached, toll free inside Alberta, by dialing 310–0000.

Aboriginal Services Branch
Telephone: 780–415–9300
Fax: 780–415–9306
E-mail: asb@gov.ab.ca

Curriculum Branch
Telephone: 780–427–2984
Fax: 780–422–3745
E-mail: curric.contact@learning.gov.ab.ca

French Language Services Branch
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- For information about LearnAlberta.ca
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Curriculum Handbook *for* **Parents**

2004–2005

Catholic School Version

GRADE 4

This Curriculum Handbook provides parents with information about the Grade 4 curriculum. It includes:

- selected learning outcomes for each subject area from the provincial curriculum
- links to the Alberta Learning Web site where more information can be found
- a feedback form.

Table of *Contents*

Message from the Minister of Learning iii
Letter from Archbishop Thomas Collins iv
Information for Parents 1
- Introduction 1
- Learning in Alberta 1
- Helping Your Child at Home 2
- School Councils 2
- School Fees and Fundraising 2
- School Choice 3

Information about Curriculum 3
- Accessing Information 3
- Curriculum Content—Deciding What Students Should Learn 4
- Curriculum Development—Who Is Involved in the Process? 4
- Ensuring Curriculum Is Current 4
- Revising Curriculum 5
- Implementing Curriculum 5

Aboriginal Education 6
Personal and Career Development 6
Supports for Learning 7
- English as a Second Language 7
- Special Needs 7
- Distance and Online Learning 8

Assessment 9
- Assessing Student Achievement 9

Grade 4 10
- Overview of Grade 4 10

Religious Education 11
Required Subject Areas 14
- English Language Arts 14
- Mathematics 16
- Science 17
- Social Studies 18
- Information and Communication Technology 19
- Physical Education 20
- Health and Life Skills 22
- Art and Music 23

Optional Subject Areas 24
- Drama 24
- Languages Other than English 24

Feedback Form 29

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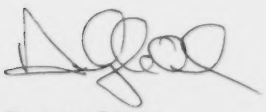
Message from the
Minister of Learning

Parents play a central role in the education of their children. Your involvement and encouragement nurtures an enjoyment of learning and helps your child excel. In order to assist you in this role, Alberta Learning has published the *Curriculum Handbook for Parents*. This series of handbooks outlines what your child learns in school and the goals that have been set for students.

Alberta has one of the best education systems in the world, due in large part to our high quality curriculum. Alberta's basic education system is designed to help students achieve their individual potential and create a positive future for themselves, their families and their communities.

Thanks in part to the high standards of Alberta's curriculum, Alberta students are achieving at or near the top of national and international assessments. Albertans share a commitment for excellence in education as we all have a stake in making sure Alberta's learning system meets the needs of today's students and future generations. Together we can ensure Alberta students have the foundation they need for a lifetime of success.

For more information about your child's classroom learning, or if you have questions about this handbook, I encourage you to talk with your child's teacher.



Dr. Lyle Oberg
Minister of Learning

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Dear Parents and Guardians:

On behalf of the Catholic Bishops of Alberta, I welcome this opportunity to affirm you in your role as parents in the education of your children and wish to express my appreciation to the Government of Alberta and Alberta Learning for this 'Curriculum Handbook for Parents'.

The Church has always recognized with confidence that you, parents, are the first and primary educators of your children, especially with regards to education in the faith. This is a noble, yet, challenging calling that is rightfully yours. Today, therefore, because of the many diverse pressures and influences on our children, your role is vital in working with our schools to continue to provide the best possible education for our children. To those of you who have entrusted your children to a Catholic school be assured that it is with great respect for these facts that we support you in your role. I encourage you to work closely with our Catholic schools by joining your local school councils or parent groups. Be a strong voice for the Catholic identity of schools. In this regard, you will share in a concrete and invaluable way in the central mission of the Church which is to proclaim Jesus and his Gospel in the world today and, in so doing, hand on our faith to our children.

I commend Alberta Learning for providing parents with this practical Curriculum Handbook. It is a clear presentation of what parents can expect of our Alberta schools, Public and Catholic, and by its very existence also acknowledges how important you are as parents in your children's education. In it, you will find a comprehensive presentation of the content and expectations of the Religious Education Program approved by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. It reflects the essential character of Catholic schools as communities of learning.

+ Thomas Collins

Thomas Collins
Archbishop of Edmonton
President, Alberta Conference of Catholic Bishops

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Information for Parents

Introduction

Web site links for further information are provided throughout the handbook.

Students learn in a variety of environments—in their homes, schools and communities. Parents, teachers and community members form a partnership to assist this learning.

When parents know what children are studying at school, they can provide better home support for their children's learning. The *Curriculum Handbooks for Parents* have been designed to assist parents in participating in their child's education by fostering an understanding of what students learn at each grade level.

Learning in Alberta

Schools provide students with a broad educational program that helps them:

- develop knowledge, skills and attitudes in a variety of subject areas
- demonstrate critical and creative thinking skills in problem solving and decision making
- demonstrate competence in using information technologies
- know how to learn and work independently and as part of a team
- develop desirable personal characteristics and the ability to make ethical decisions
- demonstrate initiative, leadership, flexibility and persistence
- have the desire and realize the need for lifelong learning.

Schools also prepare students to make positive contributions to society through communities, the workplace and/or post-secondary studies.

Within the context of Catholic schools, the curriculum in all of its aspects—content, the teaching process, and the total school environment—reflect the values of faith, hope, charity, forgiveness and justice as found in the gospels and the message of Jesus Christ as understood by the Catholic Church.

Teachers make a number of decisions when planning for classroom instruction. Within any group of students, there is a range of individual differences. Teachers use the learning outcomes of the provincial curriculum to meet the needs and interests of their students and to make connections across subject areas. They choose resources, equipment and materials to help students achieve the learning outcomes. Teaching methods and schedules vary from school to school and from class to class to meet the diverse learning needs of students.

In Catholic schools, there are many opportunities for integrating gospel values and nurturing the presence of God in our midst within the curriculum. Teachers will determine where religious education and Church teaching can be integrated with other subjects.

Alberta Learning assists teachers by reviewing and selecting the best possible resources, such as textbooks, videotapes and computer software, for all subject areas. Authorization of resources by Alberta Learning indicates that the resources meet high standards and can help students achieve the learning outcomes. Teachers can choose other resources, as long as they follow school board policy.

http://www.lrc.learning.gov.ab.ca

Authorized resources are available for purchase from the Learning Resources Centre (LRC).

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Helping Your Child at Home

Here are some important pointers for you to help your child learn.

- Be positive and encouraging in your approach to learning. It will help your child feel confident and enthusiastic about success.
- Talk to your child about schoolwork, and help with homework when you can.
- Help your child set realistic goals, and discuss progress in an encouraging way.
- Connect your child's schoolwork with everyday life, and use these opportunities for problem solving in everyday situations.
- Keep in touch with teachers about your child's progress, including successes and achievements, not just concerns.

The following resources may help you. Check your child's school for availability.

This resource is available for purchase from the Learning Resources Centre (LRC). Order online at http://www.lrc.learning.gov.ab.ca

- *The Parent Advantage: Helping Children Become More Successful Learners at Home and School, Grades 1–9*—Strategies parents can use to help their child improve organizational, reading, writing, spelling, mathematical, test taking and project skills at the grades 1–9 levels.

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/parents/mathprbk.pdf

- *Working Together in Mathematics Education*—Ways parents can support student learning in mathematics.

http://www.learnalberta.ca

- *LearnAlberta.ca* Web site—Online multimedia learning resources that directly relate to the Alberta programs of study.

http://www.2learn.ca/

- *TELUS 2Learn* Web site—An education–business partnership that provides Internet inservice, support and information for Alberta teachers, students and parents.

School Councils

Schools, parents and communities all play an important role in education. School councils are designed to give parents, students, teachers and other community members meaningful involvement in decisions about policies, programs and services and the allocation of funds. Each school council determines its own level of involvement, depending on local needs. Parents can get more information on how to get involved by contacting their local school or the Alberta Home and School Councils' Association (AHSCA).

http://www.ahsca.ab.ca

School Fees and Fundraising

Decisions regarding school fees and fundraising are made by the local board or by the school principal in consultation with the school council within policy guidelines established by the school board. In September 2000, the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) developed and provided guidelines to school boards to assist boards in establishing appropriate local policy.

http://www.asba.ab.ca/services_for_boards/policy_advisories_fund.html

School Fees

http://www.asba.ab.ca/services_for_boards/policy_advisories_fees.html

A primary objective is to ensure that fees are not being charged for core items. Fees may be charged for supplies and materials provided for the student's personal use or consumption; this may include such things as calculators, locker rentals, student planners and computer diskettes. The fees charged are on a cost recovery basis.

Local policies may include a provision to waive fees or extend payment allowances where parents are experiencing financial difficulties.

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Fundraising

The guidelines state fundraising should not be done for core items such as textbooks. Some fundraising is appropriate for things like athletic uniforms, field trips, and other extras that staff and parents want for their schools. Participation in fundraising activities should be voluntary. No student should be excluded from an event or program because the parents did not contribute.

School Choice

Choice is one of the important principles Alberta's education system is built on. When it comes to selecting a school, parents and students can choose from a wide range of options. They can select from public schools, Catholic schools, Francophone schools, private schools, and charter schools. They can also access a number of unique and innovative programs—including online schools. Parents can also opt to home school their children.

Information about Curriculum

Alberta has one of the best education systems in the world. One of the many reasons is a centralized, high quality curriculum that outlines what students are expected to learn and be able to do, in all subjects and grades. Alberta's curriculum is designed to help students achieve their individual potential and create a positive future for themselves, their families and their communities.

Accessing Information

Parents can access information about the curriculum and learning resources in a number of ways:

- Contact teachers or school administrators.
- http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/parent.asp — **Curriculum Handbooks** contain selected outcomes for each subject area from the Alberta programs of study. They provide a more detailed picture of each year. This Curriculum Handbook is one of a set from Kindergarten to senior high school produced in general and Catholic versions, and in French. They are available on the Alberta Learning Web site or for purchase from the LRC.
- http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/parent.asp — **Curriculum Summaries** for each grade level provide a brief overview of each year. The summaries are available on the Alberta Learning Web site.
- http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/ — In Alberta, the provincial curriculum is organized into **Programs of Study**. They contain learning outcomes for each subject area from Kindergarten to Grade 12. They are legal documents that outline why the educational program is offered, what students are expected to learn and the basic principles about how students are to achieve the required knowledge, skills and attitudes. School authorities use the *Programs of Study* to ensure that students meet provincial standards of achievement. However, they have flexibility to decide how to teach the curriculum and the order in which it is taught. They are available on the Alberta Learning Web site or for purchase from the LRC.
- http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/lrdb — The Authorized Resources Database on the Alberta Learning Web site lists **Alberta authorized student and teacher resources**, most of which are available for purchase from the LRC.
- http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca — The **Alberta Learning Web site** contains information on learning from the early years to adulthood.

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Curriculum Content—Deciding What Students Should Learn

The Alberta curriculum strives to:

- reflect the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes that Alberta students need to be well prepared for future learning and the world of work
- anticipate and plan for the needs of the future by considering the changes and developments in society such as trends in employment, globalization and advances in technology
- incorporate values of good citizenship and respect for different languages and cultures
- consider students' needs and abilities—intellectual, social, emotional and physical—at different ages and stages of growth
- ensure that each grade provides a foundation of knowledge for successful learning in subsequent years
- incorporate new discoveries and theories that are generally accepted by experts in subject areas
- develop skills that are necessary for success in learning a subject
- consider new research on proven teaching methods and how students learn best
- reflect the most appropriate level at which the skills are to be acquired
- integrate how the study of a subject contributes to student personal growth and development
- accommodate learning in different environments
- consider various ways of delivering a program to students, including new technologies and use of community resources such as distance learning and workplace learning.

Curriculum Development—Who Is Involved in the Process?

Alberta Learning takes a lead role in developing and revising provincial curriculum. However, many others, including teachers, principals, parents, education experts, post-secondary institutions, elders and community members, play a vital role in the process. Input from various stakeholders ensures that curriculum continually meets the needs of students and that there are smooth transitions from grade to grade and to post-secondary education and the world of work.

Ensuring Curriculum Is Current

Curriculum must provide students with the knowledge and skills needed for the present and future. It is reviewed regularly and changes are made to keep it current and relevant. Curriculum revisions occur only after extensive consultations with education stakeholders.

Alberta Learning plans any curriculum changes well in advance to minimize any impact on schools, teachers and students. This ensures that school authorities have sufficient time to prepare for the changes and purchase any needed resources.

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Revising Curriculum

If it is determined through the regular review process that there is a need to make minor or major revisions to a subject area in the curriculum, education stakeholders play a major role in the process. Alberta Learning conducts initial consultations and prepares a draft *Program of Studies* for that subject area. The draft is shared with a wide variety of education stakeholders through advisory committees, online feedback forms, conferences and presentations to teacher specialist councils. Teachers play a vital role in the process. They use their practical knowledge about a subject and about students' needs at specific age levels to provide input and feedback during the process.

Implementing Curriculum

The draft *Program of Studies*, developed in consultation with education stakeholders, is referred to the Minister of Learning for approval. Schools may have the opportunity to pilot the program for one year prior to full provincial implementation. This transition year gives schools time to prepare for the new curriculum. When a curriculum is implemented province-wide, all schools must teach the new curriculum. Alberta Learning, in partnership with superintendents, boards, teachers, principals, parents and students, shares roles and responsibilities in the effective implementation of a new curriculum.

Alberta Learning supports school authorities by producing teacher resources that provide ideas for lesson planning, instructional strategies and student assessment. Also, it provides orientation for school authority leaders and lead teachers about curriculum changes and shares updates at professional conferences and in-services.

Professional development funds are provided to six Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia. Each Regional Consortia organizes and provides activities to respond to in-service needs identified locally. This may include information and orientation sessions related to curriculum revisions.

Alberta Learning also provides funding to help schools purchase learning and teaching resources through the Learning Resources Centre. These resources are designed specifically to support the provincial curriculum.

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Aboriginal Education

Aboriginal peoples throughout the province have indicated that they want their children to complete regular school requirements and achieve the same standards as set for all students in Alberta.

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/aborigin/default.asp

The term "Aboriginal" refers to First Nations, Métis and Inuit. To support the learning of Aboriginal students, schools are encouraged to use learning resources that promote Aboriginal perspectives. All students in Alberta should understand and be aware of Aboriginal history, culture, lifestyles and heritage. The First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) initiative works to infuse Aboriginal perspectives into the existing Kindergarten to Grade 12 programs of study. The First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Education Policy Framework (2002) provides further information on this initiative. Student and teacher resources have been developed by Alberta Learning to support teaching and learning.

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/nativeed/nativepolicy

Both provincially and locally authorized Blackfoot and Cree language and culture courses are offered in the province.

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/specialneeds/teacherresourcescat.pdf

A Handbook for Aboriginal Parents of Children with Special Needs provides information to assist Aboriginal parents in working with schools to meet the special needs of their children. This resource is available for purchase from the LRC.

Personal and Career Development

Preparing for life and work is a complex process that begins in the early years of schooling and continues throughout our lives. Alberta schools are taking an active role—along with parents and the community—in helping students move successfully from basic education to further studies and the workplace.

In the elementary grades, students explore their personal interests and values, and learn about different roles and career areas. They also begin to develop life skills, such as cooperating with others and being reliable.

Personal and career development activities and outcomes are integrated into all elementary courses and programs. In particular, the elementary health program focuses specifically on these topics.

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Supports for Learning

Students have individual learning needs. Schools, supported by Alberta Learning, provide a variety of programs and services to meet the individual needs of students.

English as a Second Language

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/ESL/default.asp

Many children born in Canada have a first language other than English, and many students move here from non-English speaking countries. Schools provide additional assistance for English as a Second Language (ESL) students in Grade 1 to Grade 12. This helps them acquire sufficient fluency in English so they can function in the regular classroom as quickly as possible.

Special Needs

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/specialneeds/

The *School Act* specifies that school boards are responsible for determining if a student is in need of a special education program. Students with special needs, including those with mild, moderate and severe disabilities, and those who are gifted and talented, require specialized learning opportunities in order to receive an education that is consistent with their identified learning needs. School boards must provide special education programming for all school-age children with special education needs.

Students with special education needs may require changes to: instruction, assessment strategies, materials and resources, classroom environment, equipment and/or the regular curriculum. In addition, some students may require referral to specialized health-care services.

For more information on a Review by the Minister, contact the Disputes Management Team Leader at 780–427–7235 or see Policy 3.5.1– Review by the Minister http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/educationguide/pol-plan/polregs/351.asp.

Most students with special needs are placed in regular classrooms in their neighbourhood or local schools, and are provided with programming, supports and services to meet their individual needs throughout the school day. There are a range of placement options possible; different students need different kinds of support. Deciding on the educational placement for an individual student is a collaborative process, and in most instances, parents and school staff agree on appropriate placements. If there is a disagreement, parents can appeal a decision at the district level. The school principal can provide information on the appeal procedure in your district. If parents do not agree with the decision of an appeal to the school board, they may write to the Minister of Learning and ask for a review of the board decision.

All students with identified special needs require an individualized program plan (IPP). An IPP is a plan of action with measurable goals. It identifies your child's specific strengths, needs and current level of performance. The IPP also explains what your child will be learning and how he or she will be learning. The IPP is a flexible tool that is updated regularly. Parents, school staff and the student need to work together as a learning team to ensure that the IPP is implemented.

If you feel your child is having difficulty learning, you should talk to the classroom teacher to share knowledge about your child that could assist in determining the cause of these difficulties and in deciding if there are any teaching and learning strategies that can be made to improve your child's learning. School-based staff can use a number of informal ways to identify learning needs. If it is apparent that school-based strategies

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are not enough, the teacher, in consultation with parents, will make a referral for specialized assessment. Your child's teacher or the school principal will have information on the assessment procedures for your area.

The following resources provide additional information.

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/ParentResources.asp

- *The Learning Team: A Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs* (2003)—Information for parents of children with special needs

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/specialneeds/

- *Standards for Special Education* (Amended June 2004)—Information on the requirements for school boards regarding delivery of education programs and services to students with special needs in grades 1–12

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/resources/TheJourney/journey.asp

- *The Journey: A Handbook for Parents of Children Who Are Gifted and Talented* (2004)—Information and strategies for nurturing your child's learning and emotional well-being at home, in school and in the community.

The *Handbook for Aboriginal Parents of Children with Special Needs* and *Our Treasured Children* videotape are available for purchase from the Learning Resources Centre (LRC). Order online at http://www.lrc.learning.gov.ab.ca/.

- *A Handbook for Aboriginal Parents of Children with Special Needs* (2000)—Information for Aboriginal parents about rights and responsibilities regarding the education of their children with special needs
- *Our Treasured Children* is a videotape that complements *A Handbook for Aboriginal Parents of Children with Special Needs*. It highlights intergenerational stories from members of the Aboriginal community. The videotape is available for purchase from the LRC.

Distance and Online Learning

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/ltb/

The Learning Technologies Branch (LTB) develops course materials and learning objects for distance and online learning.

http://www.lrc.learning.gov.ab.ca

For information about purchasing distance learning print and CD materials, contact the Learning Resources Centre.

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/ltb/400/crslist.html

For a listing of all print distance learning courses available for purchase or study, visit the LTB Print Resources Web page.

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/ltb/400/crslist.html

To see the electronic products available, visit the Electronic Resources Web page.

http://www.learnalberta.ca

LearnAlberta.ca provides exciting new online educational content to students, parents and teachers. Check out multimedia material, such as National Geographic Science Centre units and the Let's Read Together: Ukrainian Reader for Emergent Readers Home. Access the Online Reference Centre for a wide variety of research tools, such as encyclopedias, dictionaries and other reference works for all grade levels.

For information about registering in a distance learning course, contact a distance learning school, an online school, or your local school jurisdiction.

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http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/french/M_12/default.asp

The French Language Services Branch develops distance learning courses for French language instruction. For courses available in French, contact the French Language Services Branch.

Assessment

Assessing Student Achievement

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/testing/default.asp

In the classroom, a teacher uses a variety of means to assess students' learning throughout the school year. These assessments are based on the instruction being provided, in order to inform the teacher's planning from day to day. Classroom assessment may serve a diagnostic purpose, indicating students' strengths and weaknesses in specific skill areas. At other times it may be formative, indicating how well students have achieved in a unit of study or how well they have achieved to a particular point in the course. At the end of a school year, a teacher also assesses how well the students have achieved the expected learning outcomes in the curriculum for that grade. This summative type of assessment is designed primarily for reporting purposes. All these classroom assessments are integral to instruction.

During the 2004–2005 school year, Alberta Learning will consult with key stakeholders on the implementation of a Grade 4 assessment in the areas of literacy and numeracy. The assessment was available for optional use by schools in June 2004.

This assessment is intended to provide useful additional information for schools in support of instructional review and planning, especially the planning of programs designed to help each child achieve the curriculum standards during the early grades. Consultation with school authorities and other stakeholders during the coming school year will provide valuable assistance with the implementation of this assessment.

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Grade 4

Overview of Grade 4

In Grade 4, students study required subject areas. Optional subject areas may be available at the local school. Students have access to 950 hours of instruction during a school year.

In Catholic schools, students participate in a Religious Education Program that is authorized by the Bishop of the local diocese.

The Grade 4 Alberta program of studies for each subject area sets out general outcomes or topics that provide an overview of the important learnings students accomplish. Specific outcomes are included for each general outcome or topic and state in detail the knowledge, skills and attitudes students are working towards achieving.

This handbook contains:

- the general outcomes or topics for each subject area
- selected specific outcomes for most subject areas.

The programs of study, which include all the general and specific outcomes, are available on the Alberta Learning Web site or from the LRC.

Required Subject Areas. ***Students take:***						
English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Physical Education	Health and Life Skills	Art and Music
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is integrated throughout English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.						

Optional Subject Areas. ***Schools may offer:***	
Drama	Languages Other than English*

* Students in French immersion programs and bilingual programs in other languages take English language arts as well as language arts in the target language.

Students in immersion and bilingual programs also take a number of subjects in the target language.

Information on the Language Initiative, which will be implemented province-wide in the 2006–2007 school year, beginning in Grade 4, is available at http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/languages/overview.asp.

Programs under development:

- Chinese Language Arts
- Chinese Language and Culture (4–12 course sequence)
- Cree Language and Culture (K–12 course sequence)
- Cree Language and Culture (4–12 course sequence)
- French as a Second Language
- German Language Arts
- German Language Arts (4–12 course sequence)
- Italian Language and Culture (K–12 course sequence)
- Japanese Language and Culture (4–12 course sequence)
- Social Studies
- Spanish Language and Culture (4–12 course sequence)
- Spanish Language Arts
- Ukrainian Language and Culture (4–12 course sequence)

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Religious Education

Religious education is an essential and integral part of the life and culture of a Catholic school. Through it, students are invited to develop the knowledge, beliefs, skills, values and attitudes needed to build a relationship with God and community through the person of Jesus Christ. Religious education shares the same goals and objectives set forth for all good education, that is, the growth and development of the whole person in all his or her dimensions—physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual.

Religious education has four essential characteristics.

It is **Trinitarian**. It recognizes God as the creator of all things who gives us Jesus. It is Jesus who reveals God to us, and in turn reveals God's Spirit, through whom we understand our faith.

It is based on **Sacred Scripture** through which we hear the mystery of God revealed, the call to be in relationship with God and each other, and we learn how to pray.

It is based on the **life experience** of the students through which they are invited to discern signs of God in their daily lives.

It is presented within the tradition of the **Catholic faith community** which, based on Church teachings, sacramental and liturgical life, provides students with experiences of faith, prayer, love and justice.

With an awareness of the uniqueness of each student and a recognition that religious development takes place through a process of stages and within a community, it is expected that program presentation will vary from place to place to meet the diverse learning and religious formation needs of all students.

The Religious Education Program for elementary and junior high schools is authorized by the Bishop of the local diocese. Some school districts have developed supplementary resources and adapted the program to better meet local needs.

The Grade 4 Religious Education Program explores the experience of the Church handing on the Good News of Jesus in the written Gospel. Through the Gospel stories of those people who encountered Jesus, we explore the meaning of Jesus Christ for us today. In the Gospels we hear the invitation given by the Holy Spirit to be disciples and friends of Jesus. The tree stump is used as a symbol of Jesus to evoke many meanings throughout the program.

Students explore these themes through the study of 10 units:

Unit 1

The Church hands on the Good News.

As a new school year begins, the students experience the joy and enthusiasm of new beginnings. They enter into the story of the first Christian community through the Pentecost story. The students receive the gospel book and begin to learn how to use it. They begin to develop reverence for the Bible as the word of God.

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Unit 2	**The Good News about Jesus Christ.** The students hear how the first Christians were attracted to Jesus, how they came to understand who Jesus is, and how the Gospels came to be written down, and how the Holy Spirit keeps alive the memory of Jesus through the Church.
Unit 3	**Jesus tells us about the reign of God.** The students meet Jesus the story teller, entering into and enjoying the parables: the Sower, the Pearl of Great Price and the Good Shepherd. Through these parables they hear about the reign of God and are invited to wonder and delight in God's unconditional love, especially as seen by people past and present.
Unit 4	**A light shines in the darkness.** Through the message of John the Baptist the students explore their experiences of darkness and light. Advent is celebrated as a season of longing and waiting for the great light: Jesus Christ, God-with-us. The Jesse Tree introduces the ancestors of Jesus and invites the students to be rooted in the life of Jesus.
Unit 5	**Jesus, "born of a woman."** The students celebrate and explore the humanity of Jesus through Mary and Joseph, Simeon and Anna. They reflect on the uniqueness of Jesus' relationship with God. The students explore the Jewish heritage of Jesus and begin to appreciate that, as a Jew, he was deeply shaped by his people's customs, culture and encounter with God.
Unit 6	**Jesus reveals the compassion of God.** The students are invited to see and hear the healing, preaching and prayer of Jesus through which he reveals to us the power and compassion of God. They reflect on our call to participate in the building of the kingdom of God.
Unit 7	**Jesus says, "I am the Way."** Through Jesus' conversations with Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, and Philip, the students are introduced to new life and rebirth in Baptism and the Holy Spirit. Story and symbol evoke in the students trust in the action of the Holy Spirit and the desire of God to immerse each of us in love.
Unit 8	**Jesus gives his life for us.** The students are invited to deepen their understanding of the death of Jesus as an act of forgiveness and love through the stories of the Last Supper and the Way of the Cross. They reflect on the Eucharist as an invitation to live a life of love and service.

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Unit 9 **"My Lord and My God."**

The students share the joy of the disciples while reflecting on the meaning and mystery of the resurrection of Jesus. They come to recognize Jesus in our midst and see how we share the life of the Trinity.

Unit 10 **Jesus' Spirit is with us.**

The students discover how Jesus continues to transform and affect our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit. They recognize that through Baptism and Confirmation we are empowered by the Spirit of Jesus and in faith we are invited to continue the mission of Jesus.

The school, through the Religious Education Program, complements parents in their role as primary and principal educators of their children. Home and family play a vitally important role in the faith development of children. Within the family, seeds of faith are planted. Family relationships and daily experiences are major factors in shaping a child's values, attitudes and Catholic identity. Regular religious practice and the application of classroom learning to daily life are critical parts of religious formation.

Prayer is an integral part of the Religious Education Program and of each school day since intimacy with God is the ultimate goal of Catechesis. Respecting the individual differences of children and our changing human needs, prayer is experienced in many different ways: silent reflection, guided imagery, scriptural prayer, ritual action, song and formal community prayer. The experience of classroom celebrations is an important component of the Grade 4 program. As we enter into prayer we give praise and thanks for God's loving presence, and call upon the Spirit to guide, nourish and empower our lives through Jesus Christ.

Teaching the sacraments occurs within the Religious Education Program. Sacraments celebrate the presence of Christ in our lives. They are effective signs that make God's grace present to us in love, healing and the transformation of our lives. Eucharist and Reconciliation are an essential part of each child's religious formation and a necessary grounding for a mature faith. As with many basic themes, Eucharist and Reconciliation are introduced in Grade 1, but continue to be deepened and intensified in each year thereafter. Children who have not yet celebrated First Communion or First Reconciliation are always welcome to contact their parish to begin their immediate preparation for the sacraments.

The Religious Education Program interprets for the students what the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches about our faith in a manner appropriate to the age and development of the students. Not everything in the Catechism is incorporated because, as the Catechism itself points out, what is taught must be adapted to the "differences of culture, age, spiritual maturity, and social and ecclesial conditions among all those to whom it is addressed" (#24). Specific excerpts are quoted at the end of each theme for the teacher to help root the contents and activities of the theme in Church tradition.

The Religious Education Program is structured around the Church liturgical year. This enables students to live and express faith in an integrated way at school, at home and in the parish community.

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Required Subject Areas

The required subject areas are the foundation of the elementary program.

Required Subject Areas. *Students take:*						
English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Physical Education	Health and Life Skills	Art and Music
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is integrated throughout English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.						

English Language Arts

View the English language arts subject page at http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/english/

There are two basic aims of English language arts. One aim is to encourage, in students, an understanding and appreciation of the significance and artistry of literature. A second aim is to enable each student to understand and appreciate language and to use it confidently and competently for a variety of purposes, with a variety of audiences and in a variety of situations for communication, personal satisfaction and learning.

From Kindergarten to Grade 12, students are developing knowledge, skills and attitudes in six language arts: Listening and Speaking; Reading and Writing; Viewing and Representing. Students learn to compose, comprehend and respond to oral, print and other media texts. They experience a variety of texts from many cultural traditions.

In a Catholic school, students are invited to consider how the knowledge, skills and values studied within the language arts curriculum are integrated with other subject areas, including religious education, and reflect the Catholic identity of the school.

The following learning outcomes are selected from the Grade 4 English Language Arts Program of Studies.

Explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences

- ask questions, paraphrase and discuss to explore ideas and understand new concepts
- identify areas of personal accomplishment and areas for enhancement in language learning and use
- identify other perspectives by exploring a variety of ideas, opinions, responses and oral, print and other media texts
- use talk, notes, personal writing and representing to record and reflect on ideas, information and experiences

Comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print and other media texts

- use ideas and concepts, developed through personal interests, experiences and discussion, to understand new ideas and information
- extend sight vocabulary to include words frequently used in other subject areas
- integrate knowledge of phonics and sight vocabulary with knowledge of language and context clues to read unfamiliar words in context

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- identify the main events in oral, print and other media texts; explain their causes, and describe how they influence subsequent events
- identify and explain connections among events, setting and main characters in oral, print and other media texts
- produce oral, print and other media texts that follow a logical sequence, and demonstrate clear relationships between character and plot

Manage ideas and information

- use organizational patterns of expository texts to understand ideas and information
- ask relevant questions, and respond to questions related to particular topics
- identify information sources that inform, persuade or entertain, and use such sources appropriately
- make notes of key words, phrases and images by subtopics; cite titles and authors of sources alphabetically
- communicate ideas and information in a variety of oral, print and other media texts, such as short reports, talks and posters
- identify strengths and areas for improvement in research process

Enhance the clarity and artistry of communication

- revise to ensure an understandable progression of ideas and information
- write legibly, using a style that demonstrates awareness of alignment, shape and slant
- use special features of software when composing, formatting and revising texts
- identify past, present and future action
- identify and apply common spelling generalizations in own writing
- present to peers ideas and information on a topic of interest, in a well-organized form
- add interest to presentations through the use of props, such as pictures, overheads and artifacts
- give constructive feedback, ask relevant questions, and express related opinions in response to oral and visual presentations

Respect, support and collaborate with others

- identify and discuss main characters, plots, settings and illustrations in oral, print and other media texts from diverse cultures and communities
- identify and discuss differences in language use in a variety of school and community contexts
- ask for and provide information and assistance, as appropriate, for completing individual and group tasks
- use brainstorming, summarizing and reporting to organize and carry out group projects
- assess group process, using established criteria, and determine areas for improvement

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Required Subject Areas. *Students take:*						
English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Physical Education	Health and Life Skills	Art and Music
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is integrated throughout English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.						

Mathematics

View the mathematics subject page at http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/math/

The aim of the mathematics program is to prepare students to:

- use mathematics confidently to solve problems
- communicate and reason mathematically
- appreciate and value mathematics
- commit themselves to lifelong learning
- become mathematically literate adults, using mathematics to contribute to society.

Students learn to use the following mathematical processes:

- communicate mathematically
- connect mathematical ideas to everyday experiences and to other subject areas
- use estimation and mental mathematics where appropriate
- apply new mathematical knowledge to problem solving
- reason and justify their thinking
- use appropriate technologies
- use visualization to assist in problem solving, processing information and making connections.

The following learning outcomes are selected from the Grade 4 Mathematics Program of Studies.

Number

- demonstrate a number sense for whole numbers 0 to 10 000, and explore proper fractions
- apply arithmetic operations on whole numbers, and illustrate their use in creating and solving problems
- use and justify an appropriate calculation strategy or technology to solve problems
- demonstrate an understanding of addition and subtraction of decimals

Patterns and Relations

- investigate, establish and communicate rules for, and predictions from, numerical and non-numerical patterns, including those found in the community

Shape and Space

- estimate, measure and compare, using decimal numbers and standard units of measure
- describe, classify, construct and relate 3-D objects and 2-D shapes, using mathematical vocabulary
- use numbers and direction words to describe the relative positions of objects in two dimensions, using everyday contexts

Statistics and Probability

- collect first- and second-hand data, assess and validate the collection process, and graph the data
- design and use simple probability experiments to explain outcomes

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Required Subject Areas. *Students take:*						
English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Physical Education	Health and Life Skills	Art and Music
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is integrated throughout English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.						

Science

View the science subject page at http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/science/

The aim of the science program is to encourage and stimulate children's learning by nurturing their sense of wonderment, by developing skill and confidence in investigating their surroundings, and by building a foundation of experience and understanding upon which later learning can be based. In elementary science, students develop their skills of inquiry and problem solving. They are also developing positive attitudes toward the study of science and the application of science in responsible ways.

In a Catholic school, students are invited to consider how issues of stewardship, morals, ethics and Catholic teaching can be integrated appropriately into the science curriculum.

The following learning outcomes are selected from the Grade 4 Science Program of Studies.

Waste and Our World

- identify wastes produced within their community and learn the methods used for disposal
- learn that some waste materials are biodegradable, that some are reusable, and that others are toxic
- recognize that human activity can lead to the production of wastes

Wheels and Levers

- examine how simple machines are used to change the speed or force of movement
- demonstrate a practical understanding of wheels, gears and levers by constructing devices in which energy is transferred to produce motion

Building Devices and Vehicles that Move

- learn that different forms of energy can be used to propel model devices
- construct a mechanical device for a designated purpose, using materials and design suggestions provided
- learn to evaluate their work, by describing the effectiveness of the device and the appropriateness of materials used

Light and Shadows

- discover that light and shadows fall along a predictable path by observing shadows and their motions relative to a light source
- discover that mirrors, prisms and a variety of other materials can affect that path by reflecting and refracting light and by splitting light into colours
- identify sources of light, describe the interaction of light with different materials, and infer the pathway of a light beam

Plant Growth and Changes

- learn various ways of starting new plants and the plants' requirements for growth
- learn that different plants have different needs, and, through hands-on activities, gain skills and attitudes for their care
- demonstrate knowledge and skills for the study, interpretation, propagation and enhancement of plant growth

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Required Subject Areas. *Students take:*						
English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Physical Education	Health and Life Skills	Art and Music
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is integrated throughout English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.						

Social Studies

View the social studies subject page at http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/social/

The aim of the social studies program is to help students develop the knowledge, skills and positive attitudes they need to be responsible citizens and contributing members of society. Students learn to acquire and evaluate information and ideas. They learn to interact with others and develop understanding and respect for people in their school, their family and their community.

The focus of the Grade 4 social studies program is Alberta—its geography and people, and the similarities between Alberta and Quebec.

In a Catholic school, students are invited to consider how issues of social justice, the contribution of the Church to community (locally and globally), and Church teaching can be integrated appropriately into the social studies curriculum.

The following learning outcomes are selected from the Grade 4 Social Studies Program of Studies.

Alberta: Its Geography and People

- understand that the environment can affect the way people live
- understand that our way of life and our environment are affected by the presence and use of natural resources
- understand that conservation is important to Alberta's future
- interpret and use aerial photographs and maps of Alberta
- make an outline map of Alberta, accompanied by developed symbols and a legend showing major cities, mountains and main rivers
- demonstrate concern for the needs of future Albertans

Alberta: Its People in History

- understand that contact between the Aboriginal peoples, the fur traders and the settlers in Alberta's history brought changes to their lifestyle
- understand that Albertans have been affected and challenged by historical events
- understand that Albertans, throughout the history of Alberta, have contributed to its development
- use historical maps and map legends to locate the territories occupied by different Aboriginal groups, major fur trading posts and communities under study
- develop appreciation of the contributions made by many people/groups in Alberta's history

Alberta: A Comparative Study with Quebec

- understand that there are similarities and differences in Alberta's and Quebec's geography and lifestyle
- understand that Canada is a bilingual country
- understand that Quebecois and Albertans have contributed to the Canadian way of life
- using maps of Canada, find Alberta's location relative to Quebec and the other provinces
- draw conclusions about the similarities and differences between Alberta and Quebec
- appreciate the many similarities and differences shared by Canadians

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Required Subject Areas. *Students take:*						
English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Physical Education	Health and Life Skills	Art and Music
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is integrated throughout English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.						

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

View the information and communication technology subject page at http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/ict/

The ICT curriculum is not intended to stand alone as a course, but rather to be infused within English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Schools have until June 2003 to phase in the program. The outcomes are organized by divisions; Division 1 is Kindergarten to Grade 3.

Students learn about the nature of technology, how to use and apply a variety of technologies, and the importance of technology to self and society.

The following learning outcomes are selected from the Grade 4 to Grade 6 Information and Communication Technology Program of Studies.

Communicating, Inquiring, Decision Making and Problem Solving

- access and retrieve appropriate information from the Internet by using a specific search path or from given uniform resource locations (URLs)
- organize information gathered from the Internet, or an electronic source, by selecting and recording the data in logical files or categories
- organize information, using such tools as a database, spreadsheet or electronic webbing

Foundational Operations, Knowledge and Concepts

- examine the environmental issues related to the use of technology
- explain the advantages and limitations of using computers to store, organize, retrieve and select information
- work collaboratively to share limited resources
- identify and apply techniques and tools for communicating, storing, retrieving and selecting information

Processes for Productivity

- enter and manipulate data by using such tools as spreadsheets or databases for a specific purpose
- edit and format text to clarify and enhance meaning, using such word processing features as the thesaurus, find/change, text alignment, font size and font style
- convert digital text files by opening and saving them as different file types
- access available databases for images to support communication

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Required Subject Areas. *Students take:*						
English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Physical Education	Health and Life Skills	Art and Music
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is integrated throughout English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.						

Physical Education

View the physical education subject page at http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/physed/

The aim of the K–12 physical education program is to enable individuals to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to lead an active, healthy lifestyle. Students participate in a variety of physical activities: dance, games, types of gymnastics, individual activities and activities in alternative environments. All learning outcomes are met through physical activity as a means of fostering a desire in students to participate in lifelong physical activity.

Within Catholic schools, some of the values integrated into the Physical Education program include recognizing the dignity of each person as evident in their unique gifts and talents, community building, cooperation and shared responsibility, respect and care for the body.

The following learning outcomes are selected from the Grade 4 Physical Education Program of Studies.

Activity

Basic Skills

- select, perform and refine challenging locomotor and nonlocomotor sequences

Application of Basic Skills

- select, perform and refine basic skills in a variety of environments and using various equipment; e.g., water safety, skating, swimming
- demonstrate a creative process to develop dance sequences alone and with others
- demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills to modify games and achieve activity outcomes
- select, perform and refine basic skills in individual activities; e.g., cross-country running

Benefits Health

Functional Fitness

- identify the nutritional needs related to physical activity
- experience movement, involving components of fitness

Body Image

- recognize and personally acknowledge individual and other attributes that contribute to physical activity

Well-being

- demonstrate changes that take place in the body during physical activity

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Cooperation

Communication
- articulate and demonstrate respectful communication skills appropriate to context

Fair Play
- identify and demonstrate etiquette and fair play

Leadership
- select and demonstrate responsibility for assigned roles while participating in physical activity; and, accept ideas from others that relate to changing/adapting, movement experiences

Teamwork
- participate cooperatively in group activities

Do It Daily ... for Life!

Effort
- demonstrate a willingness to participate regularly in physical education class
- demonstrate factors that encourage movement

Safety
- participate in, and identify the benefits of, safe warm-up and cool-down activities
- describe how to move safely in various environments; e.g., skating rink

Goal Setting/Personal Challenge
- set and achieve a long-term goal to increase effort and participation in one area of physical activity

Active Living in the Community
- identify how people, facilities and communities influence physical activity
- make decisions to be active within group activities or individually

Exemptions from Physical Education

Exemptions from participation in physical education may be given for medical conditions, when accompanied by a medical certification from a doctor to the principal; for religious beliefs, when accompanied by a statement in writing from the parent to the principal; and where access to facilities is prohibitive. When exemption is granted, activities consistent with the program outcomes should be substituted, where appropriate.

Physical Education Online

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/physicaleducationonline

The Physical Education Online Web site provides a wealth of information to support student learning of the K–12 physical education program of studies. The site is organized into three major sections:
- Program of Studies—The general outcomes and grade specific outcomes for K–12.
- Teacher Resources—Links to authorized resources, the Guide to Implementation, teaching tools, and activities and lessons that address the outcomes for the K–12 physical education program.
- Home Education—This portion is designed for parents and teachers to use with 7 to 10 students who may be enrolled in an online or home education physical education course.

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Required Subject Areas. *Students take:*						
English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Physical Education	Health and Life Skills	Art and Music
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is integrated throughout English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.						

Health and Life Skills

View the health and life skills subject page at http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/healthpls/

The aim of the health and life skills program is to enable students to make well-informed, healthy choices and to develop behaviours that contribute to the well-being of self and others. A comprehensive health program involves a partnership among home, school and community.

In a Catholic school, learning outcomes are addressed within the context of the teachings of the Catholic Church. The local boards of many Catholic school jurisdictions have approved supplementary resources and adapted the curriculum to better meet the needs of their students, their families and their faith communities.

The following learning outcomes from the Health and Life Skills Program of Studies are taught from a Catholic viewpoint and perspective.

Wellness Choices

Personal Health/Safety and Responsibility

- make responsible and informed choices to maintain health and to promote safety for self and others. God gives us the gifts of life and health; we are called to care for and respect these precious gifts

Relationship Choices

Understanding and Expressing Feelings/Interactions/Group Roles and Processes

- develop effective interpersonal skills that demonstrate responsibility, respect and caring in order to establish and maintain healthy interactions. The glory of God is in fully alive people who revere the dignity that all persons share by virtue of being created in God's image and likeness

Life Learning Choices

Learning Strategies/Life Roles and Career Development/ Volunteerism

- use resources effectively to manage and explore life roles and career opportunities and challenges. Our Christian vocation is to use our gifts, talents and the resources available to us in building God's reign of peace and love by serving others

Human Sexuality Education

Human sexuality education emphasizes the individual nature of change and growth, and the importance of one's family and personal values with respect to sexuality and sexual decision making. Learning outcomes are addressed within the context of Catholic teaching.

Schools are required to offer human sexuality education in Grade 4 to Grade 9. Parents have the right to exempt their child from this instruction. Schools will provide alternative learning experiences for those students who have been exempted from human sexuality instruction.

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Required Subject Areas. *Students take:*						
English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Physical Education	Health and Life Skills	Art and Music
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is integrated throughout English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.						

Art and Music

View the fine arts subject page at http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/finearts/

Through art and music, students develop self-awareness and express their creativity in many ways. They respond personally and critically to a variety of art and music styles and forms.

In a Catholic school, students are invited to consider how the knowledge, skills and values studied within the fine arts curriculum can be used to understand the religious dimensions of art, liturgy, music and history. They are also used directly to enhance the religious and spiritual culture of the school, and to celebrate the various liturgical feasts of the year.

Art

The aim of the art program is to enable students to learn visual arts skills and concepts, to interpret and communicate with visual symbols, to appreciate the cultural aspects of art, and to relate art to everyday life. The art curriculum has four major components: reflection, depiction, composition and expression.

The following learning outcomes are selected from the Grade 4 Art Program of Studies.

- make distinctions within classes of natural objects or forms
- assess the visual qualities of objects
- perfect forms and develop more realistic treatments
- improve compositions by refining, rehearsing and critiquing
- express a feeling or a message
- use media and techniques, with an emphasis on mixing media and perfecting techniques in drawing, painting, print making, sculpture, fabric arts, photography and computer graphics

Music

The aim of the music program is for students to develop an enjoyment of music, an understanding of a variety of music styles and an insight into music through a variety of musical activities. The music program is developed around the concepts of rhythm, melody, harmony, form and expression. These concepts are learned through participating in six skill areas: listening, moving, singing, playing instruments, reading and writing, and creating.

The following learning outcomes are selected from the Grade 4 Music Program of Studies.

- understand that beats may be grouped in 4s
- understand that tuned instruments can combine to make harmony
- understand that musical instruments have distinctive tonal qualities and may be grouped according to families
- identify major and minor chords
- respond to changes in tempo, dynamics and mood while singing
- develop skill in writing rhythm patterns
- notate and perform original compositions (does not have to be formal notation)

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Optional Subject Areas

The range of optional subject areas offered by elementary schools varies from school to school depending on such factors as student and parent preferences, facilities and staffing.

Optional Subject Areas. *Schools may offer:*	
Drama	Languages Other than English

Drama

View the drama subject page at http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/finearts/

The aim of the drama program is for students to develop a positive self-concept by assuming other roles and acquiring dramatic skills. Play, dramatic play and structured dramatic play are the foundation for dramatic forms of expression. These include dramatic movement, mime, choral speech, storytelling, dramatization, puppetry, choric drama, readers' theatre, story theatre, playmaking and group drama.

Drama may be taught as a separate subject area or integrated with other subjects.

Languages Other than English

A variety of courses and programs in languages other than English are available throughout Alberta. Some of these include Aboriginal languages, French, German and Ukrainian.

Students registered in an **immersion** or a **bilingual program** follow a language arts course in the target language (e.g., French, Ukrainian) in addition to studying English language arts. In these programs, the target language is also used as the language of instruction in other subject areas, such as mathematics, science and social studies.

Aboriginal Languages

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/aborigin

Blackfoot and Cree language and culture programs are designed to enable students to learn Aboriginal languages and to increase awareness of Aboriginal cultures.

The following learning outcomes are selected from the Blackfoot and Cree Language and Culture Programs of Study.

- learn basic communication skills in Blackfoot or Cree
- develop cultural sensitivity, and enhance personal development
- develop a desire to extend or improve proficiency in the Blackfoot or Cree language

French Immersion Program

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/quicklinks/seclang.asp

In Alberta, many students have the opportunity to study in a French immersion program. This program, designed for non-French speaking students, offers an effective way for students to become functionally fluent in French while achieving all of the learning outcomes of the regular programs of study. Graduates from French immersion programs achieve a level of fluency in the target language that allows them to pursue their post-secondary studies in French or to accept employment in a workplace where French is the main language of communication.

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There are many delivery models for French immersion present in Alberta schools:

- Early immersion—students begin their immersion experience in Kindergarten and continue in the program to Grade 12.
- Late immersion—the entry point is typically Grade 7.

Courses offered in the French language have as their basis a French version of the English program of studies, which is identical or comparable to the one used in the English program. The exception is Grade 1 to Grade 3 Social Studies. However, a program of studies specific to French immersion students was developed for the learning/teaching of French language arts. Some of the main French language arts learning outcomes are presented in the following section, French Language Arts.

A resource that may be helpful to parents is *Yes, You Can Help! Information and Inspiration for French Immersion Parents*. It is available for purchase from the LRC.

French Language Arts

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/French/FLA/abrege/IMM_4.pdf

In Division 2, the French language arts program of studies is intended to build on the skills acquired in the earlier grades, including vocabulary and syntax enrichment, to enable students to engage more actively with their environment. The program of studies also targets the development of the students' ability to plan and monitor their communication projects, whether they are working individually or with classroom partners. Students also learn to respect the basic rules of language in the oral discussions that take place in the classroom as well as in their writing projects.

In **oral comprehension**, students learn to pay particular attention to the organization of a message (text structure) and cues provided by the speaker (key words, connectives) to construct the meaning of the message and react to it.

In **oral production**, students learn the vocabulary and syntax that will enable them to express themselves in various contexts. They also develop the ability to plan group projects and to interact effectively with their peers.

In **reading comprehension**, students develop their ability to read longer, more complex texts. They learn to use a variety of tools to effectively solve difficulties they encounter in their reading.

In **writing**, students gradually learn to organize and express their ideas clearly, while still respecting spelling rules. They also learn to edit their texts using a checklist.

Note: The development of basic language skills does not take place in isolated exercises, but rather in context, so that students learn not only the rules but also when and how to apply them.

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In Grade 4, learning occurs primarily:

In **oral comprehension** through:

- listening to texts from various subject areas
- listening to short stories or chapters from novels
- listening to audiotapes
- viewing audiovisual materials, such as documentaries, plays, movies.

In Grade 4, students will learn to focus on their communicative intent to direct their listening. They will also pay particular attention to the means used by the speaker or writer to emphasize important information or focus on a passage introducing new information. Students will also become aware of the importance of recalling life experiences and previous knowledge as a basis for understanding.

In **reading comprehension**:

Teachers will select **300 to 450** word texts of everyday life, or longer for narrative texts.

To develop reading strategies, students learn to focus on their communicative intent to direct their reading and make predictions throughout their reading using various cues.

In **oral production**:

Student presentations and discussions should be well structured, with emphasis on:

- the correct use of vocabulary to express themselves in various everyday situations
- the correct use of verb tenses to express their experiences clearly
- the effective use of visual supports for their presentations, making any necessary adjustments to facilitate understanding of their message.

Emphasis on teamwork enables students to continue developing certain skills required for interacting with their peers. They will now independently undertake work, which in the previous grade, was done with the teacher's help. This includes operational rules of group work such as the roles and responsibilities of each person and their right to speak. They learn to focus on their communicative intent and to use various tools to achieve their purpose.

In **writing**:

Students learn to write texts consisting of a few paragraphs that present and develop a given topic. They also learn to write short stories with brief character descriptions.

The main purpose of these learning activities is to enable students to integrate the basic elements of the written language:

- the choice and organization of ideas
- the organization of sentences
- the choice of verb tense and the agreement of common verbs in the present tense
- noun agreement
- spelling.

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French as a Second Language

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/fsl

In Alberta, French as a Second Language (FSL) is a program in which the French language is taught as a subject, often between 20 and 40 minutes a day, to help students develop communication skills in French and acquire an appreciation and understanding of Francophone cultures.

Depending upon a school board's language policy, French as a second language may be offered as an optional program or it may be a compulsory program. School boards may begin the program at different grade levels, since the program is based on developing language proficiency over a grade or grades without being grade specific. Many schools start the program in Grade 4, but others may begin earlier or later.

The program is designed to teach students to:

- understand what they hear and read in French
- communicate their ideas orally and in written form, using an approach that is based on concrete and real-life experiences and situations
- acquire knowledge about local, provincial and national Francophone groups to become more aware of their presence and to understand them better
- develop French language vocabulary and grammar through thematic activities and projects that are related to real-life language experiences
- acquire specific language learning strategies that will help them become better second language learners.

The program is organized into three language proficiency levels—Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced. Each level has its own set of experiences. Students in elementary school generally focus on the Beginning level. As students work through this level, they develop their ability to understand and communicate in French.

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/french/FSL/whatsnew/FSL_handbook/ab_public.htm

A resource that may be helpful to parents is *French as a Second Language (FSL) Program: A Guide for Parents.* It is available on the Alberta Learning Web site or for purchase from the LRC.

Ukrainian Language Arts

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/languages/default.asp

This course is designed as the Ukrainian language learning component for students in the Ukrainian bilingual program.

Students acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and representing. They learn to use Ukrainian confidently and competently in a variety of situations for communication, personal satisfaction and further learning. They are able to explore, understand and appreciate the Ukrainian culture for personal growth and satisfaction, and to participate in and contribute to an interdependent and multicultural global society.

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Other Languages

Many school boards have developed their own programs. Locally developed language programs include: Arabic, Chinese, Chipewyan, German, Hebrew, Italian, Polish and Spanish. These locally developed courses are based on local needs and demands, and may not always be available.

For more information on second language instruction offered in your area, please contact your local school board.

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Feedback Form

Curriculum Handbook for Parents 2004–2005: Grade 4

Catholic School Version

Please indicate whether you are a:

☐ Parent ☐ Teacher ☐ School Administrator ☐ District Administrator ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Please indicate whether you used:

☐ a print copy ☐ the online format ☐ both

Please respond to the following by placing a check mark under **Strongly Disagree**, **Disagree**, **Agree** or **Strongly Agree**.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The handbook provides useful information.				
2. The amount of information is appropriate.				
3. The reading level is appropriate.				
4. The layout and organization are user-friendly.				
5. The links to the Alberta Learning Web site are helpful.				
6. Downloading and printing is easy.				

How can this handbook be made more helpful to parents?

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Thank you for your feedback.

Please send your response to:

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